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EmployAbility

Tapping the potential of persons with disabilities in Asia
and the Pacific – A guide for employers

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► **EmployAbility**

Tapping the potential of persons with disabilities in Asia
and the Pacific – A guide for employers

Barbara Murray
January 2022


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Abbreviations

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| GBDN | Global Business and Disability Network |
| GRI | Global Reporting Initiative |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| UN Guiding Principles | United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights |

Foreword

There are an estimated 472 million persons with disabilities of working age in Asia and the Pacific, almost two thirds of whom are outside the labour force. Those who are in the labour force are disproportionately concentrated in the informal economy with little or no social protection or safety net. Their potential to contribute to the labour market remains largely untapped due to obstacles and barriers they face in society and in the world of work, particularly when they live in rural areas. Women with disabilities and people with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities face additional barriers to accessing decent work.

The business and human rights cases for employing persons with disabilities are strengthening, and businesses are increasingly hiring persons with disabilities into their teams.

Developed under the Responsible Supply Chains in Asia Project, a partnership between the European Union, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, this resource guide aims to support employers and businesses wanting to promote decent work opportunities for persons with disabilities in their companies. It provides practical guidance on recruitment, job retention and career advancement practices, including in supply chains and through procurement. It provides examples from businesses and promotes engagement with organizations of persons with disabilities under the principle of “nothing about us without us”.

The guide builds on the growing role of employers and employers’ networks in promoting employment opportunities for men and women with disabilities worldwide. The emergence of the ILO’s Global Business and Disability Network and multiple national business and disability networks across the Asia and Pacific region are also testimony to a growing interest from the private sector. The efforts of employers’ organizations and the private sector more broadly can make an important contribution to the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 8 concerning promoting decent and productive work for all men and women.

ILO Regional Director

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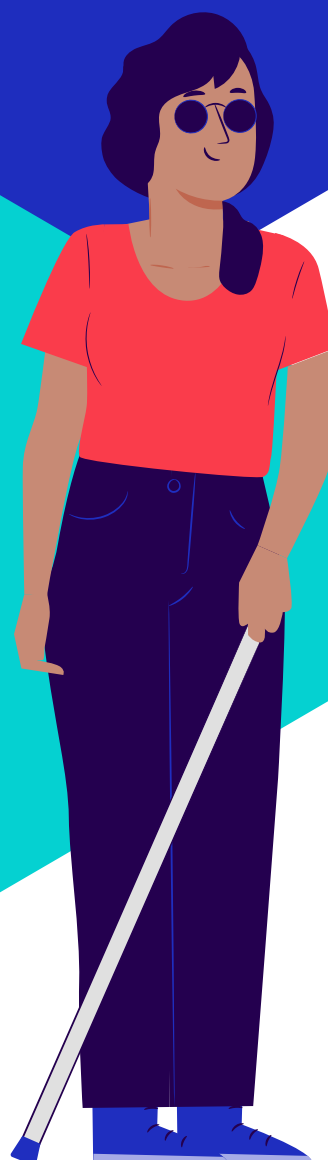
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1.



INTRODUCTION WHAT IS THE CONTEXT?

1.1 Low employment rates and poor prospects

In Asia and the Pacific, 15 per cent of the population, or 690 million people, live with a disability. Of them, 472 million are of working age. While there is a lack of reliable, comparable data on their employment status across the region, available information indicates that they are far less likely to be in productive employment, more likely to be engaged in informal economic activities with little or no social benefits than persons without disabilities and less likely to participate in the labour market at all. Women with disabilities, persons with certain types of disability and those living in rural areas are particularly disadvantaged. The COVID-19 pandemic has hit persons with disabilities in employment hardest.¹

Barriers preventing persons with disabilities from entering, remaining and advancing in the workforce include discriminatory laws and policies; inaccessible built environments, transportation and information and communications technology; and stereotypes, negative attitudes and mistaken assumptions about persons with disabilities, including their working capacity. The social and economic opportunity costs of this situation are widely recognized: People with disabilities who are unemployed, underemployed or outside the labour market represent significant untapped potential. This is a matter of concern addressed in public policies that now increasingly regard disability inclusion as in society's best interest.

As policy changes have occurred, many employers have come to realize that people with disabilities can be valuable employees and bring benefits to the workplace if they have jobs matched to their interests and abilities in a work environment that is accessible and supportive. Yet, in Asia and the Pacific, many companies have not started the

¹ See <https://ilostat ilo.org/international-day-of-persons-with-disabilities-how-disability-affects-labour-market-outcomes/>.

journey towards becoming disability-inclusive, if only because they lack awareness of how to proceed. This guide sets out to support these companies by providing succinct recommendations on how to introduce and strengthen disability-inclusion measures in their hiring, employment, training and career advancement strategies. It covers how companies can further promote disability-inclusive employment opportunities within their supply chains and support the skills development of jobseekers with disabilities, in partnership with national service providers and non-government organizations, including organizations of persons with disabilities. It also encourages collaboration and the sharing of information between employers through business and disability networks that have been established and through other employers' initiatives. References to useful resources and publications are provided along with contact details of relevant organizations.

The guide is primarily but not solely intended for top managers in companies in the Asia-Pacific region. It is also useful for managers of human resources, procurement, information and communications technology, facilities, diversity and inclusion and accessibility and safety officers.

1.2 Changed understanding of barriers to inclusion

The focus of public policy concerning persons with disabilities has fundamentally shifted in recent decades. This shift is linked to a changed understanding of disability and of what needs to be done to enhance the participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of society. Rather than concentrating on “transforming” individuals with disabilities to enable them to “fit in” through medical, educational and vocational rehabilitation, along with technical assistive devices, policies have broadened to include measures to transform those aspects of society that impede the full participation of these individuals. These include barriers incorporated in laws, policies, programmes and services or arising from the inaccessibility of buildings, public spaces, transport systems and information and communications technology. They also include attitudinal barriers stemming from stereotypes, myths and fears about disability, including in the world of work (box 1).

Recently, the focus has shifted even more to highlight the rights of persons with disabilities, including their right to reasonable accommodation (box 2).

► **Box 1. People with disabilities in the workplace – Common stereotypes**

Employers in the past have tended to regard the employment of persons with disabilities as the responsibility of governments and charitable organizations. Apprehensive of offering opportunities in their companies and fearful of anticipated costs involved, they confined their own role to voluntarism or charitable donations. Some of the most common assumptions and fears are that people with disabilities are able to perform only routine repetitive jobs; that they have low productivity and a high accident rate; and that adaptations to the workplace will be costly. These assumptions have been debunked by the experience of disability-inclusive companies in recent years, as reflected in the widely endorsed business case for employing persons with disabilities (see box 3).

► **Box 2. Selected definitions – United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments that, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Reasonable accommodation is defined as “necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms”.

Source: Articles 1 and 2, United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/ConventionRightsPersonsWithDisabilities.aspx>.

1.3 Changed expectations of employers' role

1.3.1 International treaties and initiatives

In parallel with the changes in the policy approach to disability in recent decades, international treaties and initiatives of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and other United Nations agencies have come to promote a more active role of employers and their organizations concerning persons with disabilities. Previously expected to simply offer advice to governments and service providers, employers' organizations are now prompted to actively promote disability inclusion and provide disability-related advice and support to their members. In tandem with this, private employers are encouraged and expected to develop opportunities for persons with disabilities in their workforce (see Annex II).

Employers are part of the ILO's tripartite governance structure and therefore shape the content of international labour standards to ensure that business views are reflected. The most recent ILO international treaty is the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), which, along with its associated Recommendation No. 206, has relevance to persons with disabilities. Additionally, the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work (2019) declares that efforts must be directed to ensuring equal opportunities and treatment in the world of work for persons with disabilities as well as for other persons in vulnerable situations.² Other ILO instruments of relevance to the employment of persons with disabilities are listed in Annex II.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006 is now the principle international framework for disability-related policy. It includes provision for the right of persons with disabilities "to the opportunity to gain a living through work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible".³ Among other provisions, States are required to introduce a range of supporting policies and measures to promote the employment of people with disabilities in the private sector, which may include affirmative action programmes and incentives. They are also required to ensure that reasonable accommodation in the workplace is provided for persons with disabilities. The Convention has been ratified by most countries in the Asia-Pacific region, where the promotion of work and employment prospects for persons with disabilities has featured as a goal in three consecutive Decades for Persons with Disabilities since 1993. The Incheon Strategy to Make the Right Real for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific provides the policy framework for the current Decade (2013–22) and includes as its first goal the reduction of poverty and enhancement of work and employment prospects.⁴

The promise of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to "leave no one behind" encourages policymakers to address inequalities in employment opportunity for this group. Its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) comprise a call for action globally to end poverty and implement strategies to improve health and education, reduce inequality and spur economic growth. In 2000, in recognition of the significant influence of enterprises, the United Nations launched a Global Compact to urge businesses around the world to align themselves with the SDGs. The Global Compact promotes the implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UN Guiding Principles) (2011)⁵ in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption and drives business awareness and action in support of achieving the SDGs by 2030. As of July 2021, 2,161 companies and 40 local business associations in the Asia-Pacific region had signed up to the Compact, indicating their willingness to contribute to the target on achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value (SDG 8.5). The Global Compact and the ILO have collaborated in preparing a guide for businesses on the rights of persons with disabilities that outlines good practices companies can introduce to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workplace, in their markets and in communities.⁶

2 See ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_norm/@relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_711674.pdf.

3 See Article 27 of the Convention.

4 See <https://www.unescap.org/resources/incheon-strategy-make-right-real-persons-disabilities-asia-and-pacific-and-beijing>.

5 See https://www.ohchr.org/documents/publications/guidingprinciplesbusinesshr_en.pdf.

6 See https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/disability-and-work/WCMS_571094/lang-en/index.htm.

1.3.2 Growing emphasis on corporate social responsibility and responsible business conduct

While perspectives on disability were changing, the emphasis on corporate social responsibility and responsible business conduct was growing among companies of all sizes. This involves explicit recognition of their responsibility to respect human rights, including the rights of persons with disabilities. The increased emphasis is reflected in the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (2017), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (2011) and the UN Guiding Principles. The European Union's renewed strategy 2011–14 for corporate social responsibility points to the significant contribution enterprises can make to the objectives of sustainable development and a competitive social and market economy. It defines corporate social responsibility as “the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society”.⁷

Companies are expected to report regularly on their corporate social responsibility practice, in line with the UN Guiding Principles and associated standards and as defined by the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), an international not-for-profit organization whose mission is to promote transparency on organizational impacts on the economy, the environment and people.⁸ A review of disability and corporate social responsibility reporting carried out by the ILO in 2014 found that, in general, companies did not report on measures to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities, even where they were known to be proactive on disability inclusion. The review suggested that the lack of GRI indicators on disability might be the reason for this. In response to this finding, the GRI collaborated with the ONCE Foundation for Cooperation and Social Inclusion of People with Disabilities in developing the guide *Disability in Sustainable Reporting*, providing practical advice for companies on how to publicly report on their commitment to respecting and advancing the rights of persons with disabilities and identifying a number of GRI disclosures that can be used as a basis for reporting on disability.⁹

Corporate membership organizations have also been established to promote decent working conditions and corporate social responsibility in global supply chains. These include the Responsible Business Alliance and amfori, whose codes of conduct prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability and other grounds, and Sedex, an ethical trade membership organization with more than 60,000 members that helps them align with the UN Guiding Principles and the Ethical Trade Initiative Base Code.¹⁰

In seeking to build a diverse workforce and to benefit from this diversity to achieve competitive business advantage, companies around the world have increasingly broadened their strategies and practices to include disability as a criterion of inclusion alongside gender, age, race and ethnicity. As their corporate social responsibility commitments expanded in this direction, employment opportunities for women and men with disabilities improved. Further, companies have found that their reputation as corporate leaders has been enhanced and their profitability has increased.¹¹ These commitments are reflected in the steps taken recently by many employers to ensure that their employees with disabilities are able to continue working through the COVID-19 pandemic (see box 20).¹²

1.4 Corporate initiatives relating to persons with disabilities

Many multinational enterprises have established philanthropic corporate foundations that frequently collaborate with non-government organizations to achieve their objective of tackling societal issues. Some corporate foundations explicitly include persons with disabilities in their target groups. The Standard Chartered Foundation's Futuremakers programme, for example, aims to tackle inequality by promoting economic inclusion for disadvantaged young people, especially women, girls and people with visual impairment.¹³ The Marks & Start programme of Marks & Spencer provides unemployed young people with the skills training, experience and confidence needed to find a

7 European Commission, *A Renewed EU strategy 2011–14 for Corporate Social Responsibility* (2011), 681.

8 See <https://www.globalreporting.org>.

9 See <http://www.businessanddisability.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/GRI-and-Fundacion-ONCE-Disability-in-Sustainability-Reporting.pdf>.

10 See <https://www.ethicaltrade.org/eti-base-code>.

11 See, for example, Accenture, *Enabling Change – Getting to Equal 2020: The Disability Inclusion Report* (2020).

12 See <http://www.businessanddisability.org/disability-inclusive-covid-19-response/>.

13 See <https://www.sc.com/en/sustainability/investing-in-communities/futuremakers/>.

job and has benefited people with disabilities in several countries of the Asia-Pacific region.¹⁴ Marriott International works to ensure workplace readiness and access to opportunity in its business, including its supply chains, with a focus on people with disabilities and other groups typically disadvantaged.¹⁵

Introduced at the 2019 World Economic Forum, the Valuable 500 is a global business collective of large national and multinational private sector companies committed to putting disability inclusion on their board agendas, validating their commitment with the signature of their chairperson or chief executive officer. Many are based or have branches in countries of the Asia-Pacific region. As well as being part of a community of like-minded peers, signatories have access to the collective's online toolkit designed to help leaders and their boards promote disability inclusion. Having met the target of 500 signatories in May 2021, the collective is planning a second phase of its campaign with the involvement of 13 global business leaders from a range of industries aiming to rebuild the business system to be more inclusive of persons with disabilities. The campaign is supported by Nippon Foundation and the International Disability Alliance.¹⁶

1.5 Employers' networks and disability inclusion

Employers' networks dedicated to disability inclusion in the workplace now exist in many countries, catering to the needs of private sector employers, which are often overlooked in other public initiatives. These networks enable companies to collaborate with each other and with other organizations to foster the employment and social inclusion of persons with disabilities through peer-to-peer exchanges of experience and joint initiatives. Multinational companies have been actively involved in disability inclusion at the global and country levels, generating knowledge-sharing and contributing to the development of national employers' networks to encourage and support the commitment of enterprises.

1.5.1 ILO Global Business and Disability Network

The ILO Global Business and Disability Network (GBDN), set up in 2010, is a platform for multinational companies, national business networks and organizations of persons with disabilities that promotes the inclusion of persons with disabilities in private sector companies and more broadly. It is an employer-led initiative, and members subscribe to the GBDN Charter, which is based on ten principles:

- respect and promotion of rights;
- non-discrimination;
- equality of treatment and opportunities;
- accessibility;
- job retention;
- confidentiality;
- attention to all types of disabilities;
- collaboration;
- evaluation; and
- knowledge-sharing.



14 See <https://jobs.marksandspencer.com/marks-start>.

15 See <https://www.marriott.com/diversity/diversity-and-inclusion.mi>.

16 See <http://www.thevaluable500.com>.

In addition to global and regional GBDN meetings to exchange experiences and promote collaboration, support is provided to national-level business initiatives on disability inclusion, particularly in developing countries. Publications and information resources can be accessed through the GBDN website.¹⁷

1.5.2 National business and disability networks in Asia and the Pacific

In the Asia-Pacific region, nine national business and disability networks enable member companies to share experiences and learn from each other (see section 3). In general, these networks arrange regular events, publish good practice resources and thematic reports, make annual awards to employers of excellence, organize training and promote links with organizations of and for persons with disabilities, with a view to tackling the challenges that people with disabilities face in finding and keeping decent jobs. Most of these networks are members of the GBDN.

Employers' organizations are leading several national business and disability networks in the region, using their ability to outreach to companies among their membership to encourage business leaders to include persons with disabilities within their teams. Others were set up with active involvement of multinational enterprises. These national business and disability networks are also adapting to the impacts of COVID-19. For example, the Bangladesh Business and Disability Network implemented job-matching services for persons with disabilities who lost their job or began looking for their first job during the COVID-19 crisis. And the Philippine Business and Disability Network launched a reskilling initiative to help workers with disabilities acquire skills for post-crisis work.¹⁸ These are among many examples of what national business and disability networks are doing to promote inclusion of persons with disabilities.¹⁹

17 See www.businessanddisability.org.

18 See https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/disability-and-work/WCMS_746909/lang-en/index.htm.

19 See http://www.businessanddisability.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Disability_business_networks.pdf.



2.

BECOMING DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE WHAT IS INVOLVED?

For a company to become disability-inclusive, a comprehensive approach should be adopted involving its entire workforce. It is important that:

- ▶ senior leadership is committed;
- ▶ disability awareness is promoted throughout the company;
- ▶ a disability-inclusion policy is developed, covering the company itself and making requirements of disability inclusion in its supply chain, including provisions on
 - ▶ non-discrimination and equal opportunity
 - ▶ recruitment
 - ▶ confidentiality
 - ▶ job progression
 - ▶ job retention
 - ▶ continuing disability-related awareness-raising, education and training
 - ▶ accessibility
 - ▶ occupational safety and health (including preventing and addressing violence and harassment at work);
- ▶ a strategy to implement the policy is developed and communicated effectively, setting targets to be met over a specified time frame and allocating responsibility for its implementation and monitoring to specific managers or staff members;
- ▶ the policy and strategy are regularly evaluated and reviewed, with changes made as deemed necessary; and
- ▶ knowledge-sharing and collaboration with other enterprises and networks are provided for.

This chapter discusses each of these elements, with examples of how companies across the region are implementing disability inclusiveness.

2.1 Commitment of senior leadership

The commitment of company leadership to include persons with disabilities in its workforce is an essential starting point in the creation of a disability-inclusion strategy and policy. This commitment may arise from the leaders' own recognition of the work capacity and rights of persons with disabilities, along with awareness that disability inclusion makes good business sense (box 3) or from the company's compliance with national laws and policies. Commitment may also emerge through influence of disability champions within the company or externally, employers' organizations or business and disability networks.

► **Box 3. The business case for respecting the rights of persons with disabilities**

- People with disabilities make good, dependable employees. Employers of workers with disabilities consistently report that, as a group, they perform on par or better than their non-disabled peers on such measures as productivity, safety and attendance.
- People with disabilities are more likely to stay on the job. The costs of job turnover, such as lost productivity and expenses related to recruitment and training, are well known to most employers.
- Hiring people with disabilities increases workforce morale. Many employers report that teamwork and morale improve when workers with disabilities become part of the staff.
- People with disabilities are an untapped resource of skills and talents. In many countries, they have skills that businesses need, both technical job skills and transferable problem-solving skills developed in daily life.
- People with disabilities represent an overlooked and multibillion-dollar market segment,^a comprising around 690 million persons in the Asia-Pacific region. This number is likely to increase as the population ages and life expectancy increases, along with other factors.^b Businesses accessible to them will also attract their families and friends as customers and potential customers.
- Employees with disabilities know first-hand about the needs of this consumer segment and can assist in identifying, developing and delivering products and services targeted at this significant and growing market of customers, their families and friends.

Note: ^a See, for example, *Global Economics on Disability 2020*, <https://www.rod-group.com/content/rod-research/edit-research-design-delight-disability-2020-annual-report-global-economics>. ^b See ESCAP, *Disability at a Glance 2019: Investing in Accessibility in Asia and the Pacific — Strategic Approaches to Achieving Disability-inclusive Sustainable Development*.

Source: ILO GBDN website, www.businessanddisability.org.

2.1.1 Recognition of the rights and potential of persons with disabilities

Businesses of all sizes are compelled to respect human rights, including those of persons with disabilities, as part of their corporate social responsibility. Some companies have a long history of employing jobseekers with disabilities because their rights and work capacity have been acknowledged. In more recent years, the inclusion of persons with disabilities within the diversity and inclusion strategies of many companies, especially multinationals, reflects the realization that disability inclusion is an important influence on competitiveness and that diversity in the workforce is of benefit to business (boxes 3 and 4).

► Box 4. Recognizing the potential of persons with disabilities – Promising company practices

At **Accenture**, a global professional services company with leading capabilities in digital, cloud and security services, the commitment towards disability inclusion starts at the top with the chairperson and CEO as well as its board of directors. Leaders at all levels are encouraged to support disability inclusion in the company and to demonstrate their commitment by being advocates internally and externally, earmarking disability inclusion as a business priority with strategic plans, goals and resources as part of the company's inclusion and diversity strategy. A Global Council comprising Global Management Committee sponsors and senior leadership across the business defines the strategy for disability inclusion and drives it to fulfilment.^a

The Managing Director of **Allegis Group India**, which is part of an international talent management company, is a champion of disability inclusion. Directly involved in setting the direction for the Allegis Diversity and Inclusion agenda, his personal attention to the needs and journey of each employee with a disability has given rise to important insights and contributed to designing the future course of action.^b

In China, **Kechaoda Technology**, a mobile phone manufacturer integrating design, research and development, production, sales and service, includes Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Pakistan and Thailand in its markets. In line with its corporate social responsibility policy, the company has increased the number of its employees with disabilities to more than 50 per cent of its workforce. Linked to this, the company reports that the turnover rate of staff has dropped and the quality of production has notably improved.^c

IBM employed its first employee with a disability in 1914, long before the business case for respecting the rights of persons with disabilities was established and before laws on the rights of persons with disabilities were introduced. Its leaders actively support the inclusion of persons with disabilities by setting company-wide norms, taking a public pledge to be an ally to persons with disabilities and visibly participating in and contributing to all other interventions. To see the leaders “walking the talk” helps in encouraging employees to do the same.^d

Source: ^a Direct communication with Accenture Disability Inclusion team, September 2021; ^b IBDN, *Inclusion Best Practice for Corporates* (2021), <http://www.ciiibdn.com/Publication/IBDN-Report.pdf>; ^c direct communication with the China Chapter of the ILO GBDN, September 2021; ^d see https://www.ibm.com/impact/be-equal/pdf/IBM_Diversity_Inclusion_Report_2020.pdf and direct communication with IBM India Diversity & Inclusion Partner, October 2021.

2.1.2 Compliance with national laws and policies

For some companies, the starting point will be the need to conform to legal and policy requirements of the country in which they operate. These can take the form of employment equity or non-discrimination laws promoting equality of opportunity and treatment or prohibiting disability-based discrimination or quota laws that oblige companies to employ persons with disabilities as a specified percentage of their workforce (box 5). Details of the laws in place in countries of the Asia-Pacific region can be reviewed under Country Profiles in the GBDN website.

► Box 5. Compliance with national laws and policies – Promising company practices

Alfamart, a franchised chain of convenience stores from Indonesia with more than 10,000 stores across South-East Asia, started its disability-inclusion initiative in 2016 to comply with a government regulation on disability. This required it to rebuild its employment and training procedures from scratch and to collaborate with disability-related organizations in developing new training programmes and identifying candidates. To date, it has employed around 700 workers with disabilities at its stores and storage facilities.^a

The **AXA Group**, a worldwide leader in insurance and asset management, includes disability inclusion as one of its six priorities in its diversity and inclusion policy. Each entity within the group can set its local disability-inclusion strategy according to local laws and needs.^b

Source: ^a See https://www.ilo.org/jakarta/info/public/pr/WCMS_764860/lang--en/index.htm; ^b direct communication with AXA Diversity and Inclusion Programme Manager, September 2021.

Most countries in the Asia-Pacific region promote non-discrimination and equality of opportunity in their labour laws (box 6). Most of them have ratified ILO Convention concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation, 1958 (No. 111). At least 15 countries have adopted disability-related employment equity or non-discrimination laws. In some countries, the law specifies acts that constitute discrimination. Typically, these laws require that reasonable accommodation be provided and, in some cases, failure to provide it is regarded as discriminatory and is thus illegal. In some countries, employers are required to draw up action plans to address barriers to inclusion in the workplace.²⁰

► **Box 6. Gender-based discrimination**

Gender-based discrimination is the most common form of discrimination. In the case of persons with disabilities, this is reflected in the fact that men with disabilities are almost twice as likely to have a job than women with disabilities. Women with disabilities face a double disadvantage in the labour market based on both their gender and their disability status.

Private sector efforts to promote gender equality and women in business and management make an important contribution to achieving gender equality in the world of work. Some key drivers of gender inequality in the workforce are women's disproportionate share of unpaid care duties; discrimination and occupational segregation, violence and harassment; gender pay gap; and gaps in women's voice, representation and leadership. Companies already promoting gender equality and gender-responsive policies and programmes can use these as an entry point to extend their diversity efforts to include women and men with disabilities. Minimally, it is critical to examine the specific needs of women with disabilities because they may face additional barriers. The areas cited here can provide ideas on what some of the gender challenges may be. These can be further explored by discussing with women with disabilities in the company or by collaborating with a disabled persons' organization.

Private employers are required to fulfil quota obligations in 12 Asian-Pacific countries, ranging between 1 per cent and 5 per cent of the workforce. In some cases, non-compliance with the quota obligation involves sanctions in the form of levy payment to the government or to a fund for the promotion of employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. Compliance entitles employers to incentives ranging from tax exemptions to wage subsidies and subsidies for assistive equipment or workplace adjustments.²¹

Where to find support

Employers may approach public, private or non-governmental employment services for advice and support regarding the fulfilment of their national legal obligations and how to avail of government incentives. In some countries, general employment services promote opportunities for jobseekers with disabilities alongside other jobseekers. In other countries, specialized services catering only to jobseekers with disabilities have been established for this purpose. In the Republic of Korea, for example, the Korean Employment Agency for Persons with Disabilities provides a range of employment-related services for persons with disabilities, including training and placement as well as collaborating with employers to promote employment opportunities. In Japan, the Japan Organization for the Employment of Elderly, Persons with Disabilities and Job Seekers provides advice and support to employers regarding the employment of persons with disabilities, including lending assistive equipment. In Indonesia, DNetwork, a non-profit organization, provides services to jobseekers with disabilities and to companies to support the process of recruitment.²²

20 ILO, *Achieving Equal Opportunities for People with Disabilities through Legislation* (2014).

21 See ILO, *Promoting Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities: Quota Schemes* (2019).

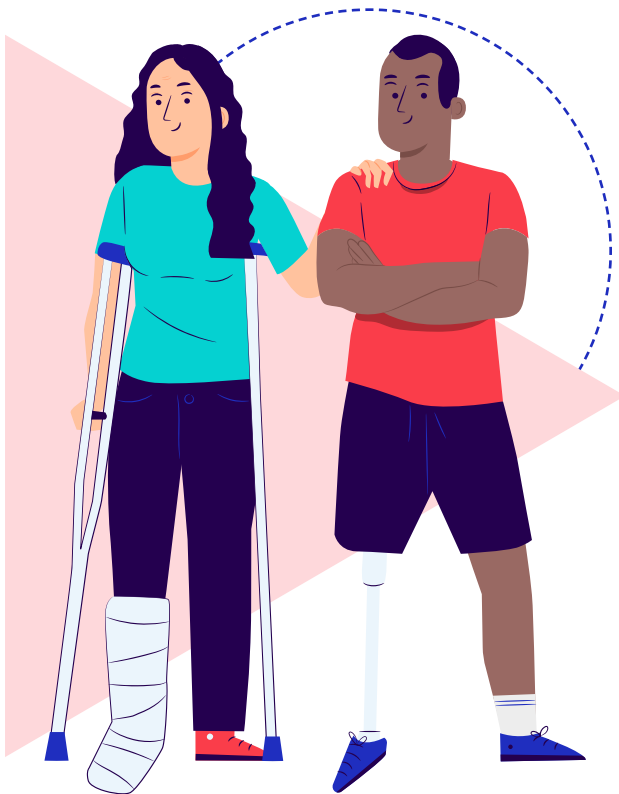
22 See <https://www.dnetwork.net>.

Organizations of persons with disabilities can also advise employers on what they should do to meet their obligations. Some provide training and recruitment support to companies. In Indonesia, for example, Puspadi Bali, a training service operated in large part by persons with disabilities, provides training for jobseekers with disabilities, followed by internships with collaborating companies and leading, in some cases, to recruitment. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar, organizations of persons with disabilities have provided vocational training, entrepreneurship development and internship opportunities within the framework of international technical cooperation projects.²³

Organizations providing vocational training services to persons with disabilities can prove to be valuable partners in implementing disability-inclusion strategies in line with national requirements. These organizations can be contacted directly or through the national business and disability network with which they frequently collaborate.

2.1.3 Influence of disability champions in or outside a company

Where senior leaders are not yet committed to disability inclusion, disability champions within the company can liaise with employers' organizations, national business and disability networks, service providers or organizations of persons with disabilities to involve these top managers in promotional events illustrating the benefits to business of including persons with disabilities in a company's workforce as well as in its supply chain. Exposure to what other companies are doing in relation to disability through such events may be all it takes to convince top management to take action.



2.2 Promoting disability awareness

Disability awareness-raising and related disability equality training should be provided at the outset of a company's path to becoming a disability-confident organization and on a regular basis thereafter, starting with the persons charged with the development of policy and implementation strategies. The aim should be to tackle stereotypes and unconscious bias and promote an understanding of disability-related issues. This includes promoting the positive impacts of disability inclusion on company profitability and what it takes to foster an inclusive environment and for the company to become "disability-confident" (box 7). The Invalid Opinions Campaign²⁴ is but one example of tackling stereotypes and unconscious bias towards persons with disabilities in the workplace.

²³ See ESCAP, *Employment of Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific: Trends, Strategies and Policy Recommendations* (2020), https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/knowledge-products/Employment_of_Persons_with_Disabilities_final_0.pdf.

²⁴ See <http://www.businessanddisability.org/invalidopinions/>.

► **Box 7. Disability-confident companies**

Companies that are disability-confident:

- understand how disability and the company's own corporate disability performance affect every aspect of the business;
- remove barriers for groups of people with disabilities to improve accessibility and build disability inclusion;
- make adjustments that enable individuals to contribute to business success;
- challenge biases; and
- avoid negative assumptions about what people can do on the basis of a label.

For example, GSK, a global health care company, believes that disability confidence is essential to understanding its customers and colleagues and attracting and retaining the best talent. The company established a Global Disability Confidence Council in 2014, chaired initially by its President of Global Manufacturing and Supply and later by the Senior Vice President of Global Ethics and Compliance, who is a member of the corporate executive team and reports to the CEO. Council members include senior leaders across the company who are held accountable for delivering the disability-confidence strategy, workstream action plans and implementing council decisions. Leaders of the internal Global Disability Confidence Network Employee Resource Group are also full members of the Council. Priorities include developing a measurable three-year strategic disability confidence plan (currently 2021–23) to be agreed by the corporate executive team; and building the skills and knowledge of all the company's employees so they become more disability confident and actively support equal opportunities for and inclusion of people with disabilities.

Source: See <http://www.businessanddisability.org/publications/>.

Several national business and disability networks provide disability-related training and sensitization. The **Australian Network on Disability**, for example, offers training on disability confidence for human resources personnel, managers, supervisors, recruiters and workforces.²⁵ The **Employers' Network on Disability** in Sri Lanka runs disability sensitization programmes for corporations, including training on disability etiquette and basic sign language.²⁶ Toolkits are also available to companies for guidance (box 8).

► **Box 8. Disability-inclusion resources and toolkits – Examples**

The ILO Infostory, "**The Win-Win of Disability Inclusion**", is intended for employers at the beginning of their disability-inclusion journey. It outlines why employing persons with disabilities makes good business sense for private companies and what can be done to promote inclusion.^a

Inclusion Works, a consortium of specialists and global leaders in disability and development from 16 international organizations, has produced an open-source disability-confident employers' toolkit under its **Inclusive Futures** initiative. The toolkit comprises a portfolio of practical guides, checklists, case studies and resources.^b

Standard Chartered, an international banking group with branches in 59 countries (including 20 in Asia and the Pacific), has developed a disability toolkit, *Building a Disability-Confident Workplace*, openly available online.^c

EY, the global organization comprising members of the Ernst & Young Group, has produced a booklet, *Taking Disability Confidence Global – Practical Tips on How to Increase Disability Confidence in Organizations*, based on the experiences of global employers.^d

Source: ^a See <https://www.ilo.org/infostories/en-GB/Stories/Employment/The-win-win-of-disability-inclusion>; ^b see <https://inclusivefutures.org/disability-confident-employers-toolkit/>; ^c see https://av.sc.com/corp-en/content/docs/SC_Disability-Toolkit.pdf; ^d see <https://www.charta-der-vielfalt.de/uploads/txdreipccdvdiversity/ey-taking-disability-confidence-global.pdf>.

25 See <https://www.and.org.au/pages/training.html>.

26 See <https://employers.lk/disability-resource-centre/>.

2.2.1 Continuing awareness-raising, education and training

Awareness-raising on disability and related education and training should be arranged regularly to ensure that leaders, managers and all employees, including those who have recently joined a company, continue to be or become aware of the company's disability-inclusion policy and practices (box 9). Continuing awareness-raising provides the opportunity to highlight the company's commitment to creating an inclusive work environment, to making adjustments and accommodations when required and to maintaining confidentiality of information supplied in relation to reasonable accommodation requests.

► **Box 9. Continuing disability sensitization – Company examples**

The **AXA Group** regularly raises awareness on disability inclusion in training provided and through dedicated webinars featuring external speakers as well as employees with visible or invisible disabilities. Disability destigmatization remains necessary to create a working environment in which employees feel safe to disclose a disability and, in return, get the support and reasonable accommodation a company offers.^a

At **IBM**, the focus is on enabling employees to become actively supportive of colleagues with disabilities and other marginalized members of the workforce through ongoing training and sensitization sessions and panel and roundtable discussions showcasing employees' stories. They leverage humour to make it easy to receive messages and organize film shows focused on disability-inclusion themes, followed by open discussions. A team of trainers and facilitators takes the understanding further to all teams, training vendor support staff to make them aware and receptive. Reverse mentoring is arranged, pairing leaders with employees with disabilities. IBM also sponsors and participates in external forums to foster wider acceptance of the theme of disability inclusion.^b

Source: ^a Direct communication with AXA Diversity and Inclusion Programme Manager, September 2021; ^b Direct communication with IBM India Diversity & Inclusion Partner, October 2021.

2.3 Developing a disability-inclusion policy and strategy

Once company leaders and senior management express commitment to disability inclusion in the workforce, a policy should be developed. It should include strategies and measures that give practical effect to the policy commitment, based on the principles of non-discrimination and equal opportunity (box 10). This process should start with a review of existing procedures and practices to highlight areas where change is required.

► **Box 10. Promoting employment of people with disabilities – Promising company practice**

In 2012, the **ANA Group**, a global air travel company, established a team in its Human Resources Department that is dedicated to promoting employment of people with disabilities. It promotes group-wide efforts to employ persons with disabilities by disseminating information and assigns employment promoters for individuals with disabilities to each ANA Group company. The team organizes regular meetings and seminars to ensure stable employment. In 2015, the ANA Group developed the 36K-Employee Kickoff, a code of conduct for the employment of people with disabilities, developed by the human resources personnel in consultation with persons with disabilities. This code informs all employees of the Group's disability-related policies and how everyone has a role in making the work environment disability inclusive. The code is based on the Group's conviction that each employee, regardless of their disability, is indispensable to the success of the business and will be provided with opportunities to be successful. It requires that all employees help facilitate the inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace and to appreciate and respect each person's individuality.

Source: See www.ana.co.jp/group/en/csr/human_resources/promotion_diversity and <https://www.ana.co.jp/group/en/csr/employees/disabilities.html>.

2.3.1 Reviewing policies and practices

After the initial disability sensitization has taken place among personnel tasked with developing the company's disability-inclusion policy and strategy, the next step is to determine the “lay of the land”:

- The company should arrange for an assessment of its policies, practices, structures and operations to identify areas where change is required, at the headquarters and in its subsidiaries.
- This assessment might be carried out by the company's human resources team, a diversity and inclusion structure or some other group established for the purpose.
- The GBDN's Model Self-Assessment Tool, based on the ten principles of its Charter, could be used as a basis for this assessment, adapted as required to the particular circumstances of a company and the national context where it operates.²⁷

Support in conducting the assessment could be sourced through a national business and disability network or some external disability-inclusion support service. In Sri Lanka, for example, the Employers' Federation of Ceylon **Employers' Network on Disability** undertakes audits on behalf of its members to advise on how to create a barrier-free environment to enable access for all, including consultation on the areas of concern when employing persons with disabilities. In New Zealand, **Accessibility Tick** works in partnership with disability-support organizations to assist companies in becoming more accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities (box 11).

► **Box 11. Reviewing policies and practices – Company example**

Vector, New Zealand's largest distributor of electricity and gas, started a process of becoming a disability-inclusive company by setting up a team involving its Human Resources, Digital, Procurement and Customer departments to review all policies and practices. Priority areas of change were found to exist primarily within the company's recruitment processes and support of staff. Vector's recruitment process and the way jobs are advertised were adjusted to reduce the likelihood of disability discrimination in hiring. Greater clarity and guidance is now provided to recruiters. And applications from people with disabilities are encouraged, including application assistance. In addition, health and safety protocols were revised to provide for accessibility; workplaces were made more accessible and digital technology introduced for employees with hearing and visual disabilities; well-being initiatives introduced to support staff with mental health challenges; and senior managers attended unconscious bias training. The accessibility initiatives have had the full support of the executive team and CEO, who shared the company's vision with all internal staff. Vector was the first company in New Zealand to receive the Accessibility Tick.

Source: Direct communication with Accessibility Tick, June 2021.

2.3.2 What should a disability-inclusion policy cover?

Principles underlying a policy should be those of non-discrimination, equality of opportunity and accessibility. The policy should take into account national policies and laws concerning non-discrimination and inclusion of persons with disabilities in all countries in which the company operates. It should be linked to existing company policies, such as those on diversity and inclusion, gender equality, race and ethnicity. It should make provision for recruitment, confidentiality of information, job progression, job retention, awareness-raising, accessibility and occupational safety and health, as well as regular evaluation and review (box 12).

²⁷ See <http://www.businessanddisability.org/charter-principles-based-self-assessment/>.

► **Box 12. Developing a disability-inclusive policy – Reference tools**

The **Charter of the ILO Global Business and Disability Network** is based on principles that should underly a company's disability-inclusion policy and strategy and resources available to give further guidance.^a

The **ILO Code of Practice on Managing Disability in the Workplace**^b gives guidance for employers on improving recruitment, promotion, job retention and return-to-work prospects for persons with disabilities, based on equality of opportunity. The Code also makes recommendations for employers' organizations in their role as providers of information and advisory and other services to their members as well as advocates of employment opportunities.

Source: ^a See <http://www.businessanddisability.org/charter/>; ^b see https://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS_103324/lang-en/index.htm.

Non-discrimination and equal opportunity

In developing the policy, consideration should be given to the needs of people with disabilities who are additionally disadvantaged in their search for a job, such as women, persons from ethnic minorities as well as persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities. When disability intersects with other characteristics of a worker's identity, such as gender, ethnicity and HIV status, the risk of discrimination, violence and harassment increase. The compounding nature of discrimination based on multiple grounds can impact a worker's ability to access and progress at work. This makes it important to consider supplementing universal policies with gender-responsive targeted measures in support of workers who face compounded disadvantages due to their personal characteristics.

Consulting with stakeholders

The policy should be developed in consultation with employees with disabilities, workers' representatives, organizations of persons with disabilities (see section 3). It should reflect the company's commitments to the codes of conduct of corporate membership organizations to which the company belongs. Provision should be made for promoting opportunities for persons with disabilities among business partners and other companies in the supply chain, for example, by including a requirement on disability inclusion in company codes of conduct concerning suppliers and, where relevant, supporting its implementation. It should also foresee collaboration with a national business and disability network and organizations of people with disabilities as well as with certifiers (see section 3) and corporate membership organizations, such as Sedex, amfori and the Responsible Business Alliance.

2.4 Disability-inclusion strategy

Once the disability-inclusion policy has been agreed, the company should develop a strategy for its implementation, spanning one or more years (box 13). The strategy should specify measures to be introduced, targets to be achieved and staff members responsible for moving the inclusion agenda forward and who accountable to senior leadership, the company board or some other instance.



► **Box 13. Disability-inclusion strategies – Promising company practices**

Diversity and inclusion are central to the culture of **Deutsche Bank**, which respects and embraces the diversity of its employees, clients and communities. Deutsche Bank seeks to build talented and diverse teams to drive business results; create a respectful and inclusive environment where people can thrive; and strengthen its relationship with clients, partners, regulators, communities and potential employees. Deutsche Bank's commitment to disability inclusion includes becoming more disability confident through better policy, practices, procedures and more open discussion; building awareness of visible and invisible illness or disabilities; education and practical support for employees and managers; and inclusion and personal development for people with disabilities. As part of Deutsche Bank's global diversity initiative that aims to build a strong inclusive culture, dbEnable encompasses the organization's initiatives to include people with disabilities in the workplace by raising awareness and facilitating opportunities for hiring managers to discover this talent pool.^a

The **Schindler Group**, providers of elevators, escalators and moving walks, is committed to being an equal opportunity employer and to bridge the opportunity gap that spans all industries. The company's approach focuses on integrating inclusion and diversity across the pillars of its People Strategy – from talent attraction and retention, leadership training and assessments to promotion and succession planning. Its long-standing commitment to inclusion and diversity forms a central part of the company's business approach, especially because accessibility is at the core of the Schindler Group's products and services. As part of this approach, the Schindler Group embraces diverse abilities and has targeted programmes in place to include people with disabilities in its operations. Technicians are trained to understand disability-related mobility requirements. Schindler China, for example, is committed to providing opportunities to people with disabilities throughout the company, fully supports local initiatives and targets in this regard and provides transportation solutions that enhance their mobility.^b

The overall disability inclusion approach of **Standard Chartered** is underpinned by its [Group Diversity and Inclusion Standard](#), which outlines the company's commitment to equal opportunity, dignity, respect, measurable objectives, roles and responsibilities. Standard Chartered has three dedicated employee networks to support colleagues: the Global Disability Network and the Global Women's Network and more than 60 local Employee Resource Groups. The disability Employee Resource Groups provide a collective voice for action in country and share ideas on how to improve disability inclusion.^c

Source: ^a See <https://www.thevaluable500.com/the-valuable-500/> and <https://www.sbnod.com/deutsche-bank/>; ^b see <https://www.thevaluable500.com/the-valuable-500/>; ^c https://av.sc.com/corp-en/content/docs/SC_Disability-Toolkit.pdf and <https://www.thevaluable500.com/the-valuable-500/>.

2.4.1 Recruitment on the basis of equal opportunity and equal treatment

Company recruiters should become familiar with aspects of the recruitment process that may need to be adjusted to make it accessible to persons with disabilities. Practical guidance on what needs to be done can be found in different publicly available guidelines and toolkits (box 14).

► **Box 14. Recruitment – Examples of relevant tools**

The International Labour Organization's ***Job and Work Analysis – Guidelines on Identifying jobs for Persons with Disabilities*** can be useful in matching the skills and abilities of a jobseeker with the requirements of a job and in identifying adjustments and accommodations that may need to be carried out for jobs for which candidates with disabilities have been recruited.^a

The **Inclusive Futures Disability Toolkit** includes a checklist for disability-confident recruiters.^b

The **ILO Code of Practice on Managing Disability in the Workplace (2001)** advises employers on the recruitment process, from preparing for recruitment to interviewing and testing and employees' job orientation.^c

Talentworks is an online resource that helps employers and human resources professionals make their e-recruiting technologies accessible to all jobseekers, including those with disabilities.^d

Source: ^a See https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_111484.pdf; ^b see <https://inclusivefutures.org/disability-confident-employers-toolkit/>; ^c see https://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS_103324/lang--en/index.htm; ^d <https://www.peatworks.org/digital-accessibility-toolkits/talentworks/>.

The following points are central to a disability-inclusive recruitment process.

- Job opportunities for persons with disabilities should be communicated in an accessible format, in collaboration with national employment services, organizations of persons with disabilities and vocational training service providers. It should include a note that applications from persons with disabilities and, in particular women with disabilities, are encouraged.
- Application forms should be in an accessible format and written in plain language.
- In arranging assessments to shortlist applicants, including through artificial intelligence software, care should be taken to ensure that people with disabilities are given equal opportunity to be considered for a job and that they do not face inherent disadvantages.²⁸ Disadvantage may arise, for example, if artificial intelligence is used in the recruitment process involves analysis of facial movements or voice or personality tests that disproportionately exclude people with disabilities. Companies can seek to ensure that artificial intelligence-based recruitment processes are fair to applicants with disabilities. For example, they can provide alternative ways of identifying applicants' individual capacities and potential, in consultation with persons with disabilities and their representatives and by enabling candidates to request adjustments in each stage of the recruitment process.²⁹
- If the traditional interview process disadvantages a candidate or a telephone interview is required, alternative ways of demonstrating potential to acquire the skills needed for the job in question should be offered, such as extended job interviews, extra time to complete a test, arrangement of sign language interpretation or work trials.
- A simple process should be developed for requesting reasonable accommodation, following recruitment (box 15).
- Successful candidates with disabilities should be offered the same work conditions and career prospects as non-disabled peers, with a record made of reasonable accommodations agreed so that this is clear to all managers and supervisors. If gig economy contractual arrangements are envisaged, involving short-term contracts or casual work arrangements, whereby the person with a disability is employed as a freelance or self-employed worker, flexibility may be required in terms of time and place, employment benefits and protections so that the contract provides decent work conditions.

28 Institute for Ethical AI, *Recruitment AI has a Disability Problem: Questions Employers Should be Asking to Ensure Fairness in Recruitment* (2020).

29 See, for example, S. Nugent and S. Scott-Parker, *Recruitment AI has a Disability Problem: Anticipating and Mitigating Unfair Automated Hiring Decisions* (2021), <https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/8sxh7/>.

► **Box 15. Providing workplace adjustments and reasonable accommodation – Company examples**

Accenture's Disability Accommodation and Adjustment Request tool allows persons with disabilities to request workplace adjustments or accommodations that are funded through a centralized global budget and can support them in performing better. It provides a broad range of support, including assistive technologies, web and workplace accessibility and human resources adjustments with an easy navigation process. It ensures that all requests are resolved in a timely manner.^a

The **IBM** Accessible Workplace Connection is a globally used application to reduce the cycle time for requesting an accommodation that significantly improves the productivity of employees with disabilities. This Budget is owned by the Human Resources team at the organizational level, which is assigned to buy assistive technologies and devices required, thereby removing the financial element from the individual's department and making it convenient for employees to make such requests.^b

Source: ^a Direct communication with Accenture, August 2021; ^b Direct communication with IBM India Diversity & Inclusion Partner, October 2021.

Strong communication internally is central to fostering staff commitment to the policy and to avoid perceptions that persons with disabilities are recruited due to quota requirements rather than because of their competence. Once the disability-inclusive recruitment process is ready to be put into action, the company should announce its commitment to employing persons with disabilities to its workforce and to targeted groups, including relevant service providers, organizations of persons with disabilities and employment services.

The effectiveness of the recruitment process should be regularly reviewed on the basis of key performance indicators, such as number of applicants with disabilities and the number recruited, minimally disaggregated by sex and any other relevant characteristics; adjustments required; costs involved; and career progression (box 16).

► **Box 16. Recruitment practices – Company examples**

In Bangladesh, several companies in the apparel industry have recruited persons with disabilities. In the **SHIN SHIN** Group, disability inclusion is a core component of its corporate social responsibility policy. SHIN SHIN Group currently employs 35 persons with disabilities in its factory, which is accessible to persons with different types of disability. In addition to eliminating physical barriers, SHIN SHIN focuses on breaking down attitudinal barriers to inclusion. The **Urmi Group**, a company manufacturing 30 tonnes of fabric and 160,000 apparel pieces daily, employs 55 employees with disabilities; and 46 women with disabilities are employed in a factory linked to the Urmi Group.^a

Dynapack Asia, a group of companies involved in providing packaging and plastic solutions that is headquartered in Indonesia, has for years offered opportunities for people with disabilities to work in its workplaces and factories, based on the conviction that disability inclusion makes a positive contribution to its business value. In 2019, the CEO designated disability inclusion as one of the group's priority initiatives. All the group's subsidiaries in China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam are encouraged to become more engaged and increase their cooperation with communities and institutions related to disability. The hope is that people with disabilities will be supported in developing the skills required in the group's manufacturing industry and thus will enhance their daily lives through stable income.^b

Source: ^a Direct communication with Bangladesh National Business and Disability Network, August 2021; ^b see <https://www.thevaluable500.com/the-valuable-500/>.

Building on technological developments

In seeking to recruit persons with disabilities, companies can build on technological developments that have opened up new opportunities linked to information and communications technology and led to the availability of new assistive devices that make it easier for people with disabilities to live and work independently.³⁰ Telework, e-commerce and online learning all require the increased availability of accessible and affordable computers, tablets and smart phones along with improved internet access (box 17). The potential of artificial intelligence to open further opportunities in manufacturing and service industries through the combination of computers and robotics is being explored.³¹ In drawing on technological advances, companies should be aware that while technology provides opportunities, it can also widen inequalities, for example, due to low levels of digital literacy or lack of familiarity with internet-based communication tools.

► **Box 17. Education on collaboration tools – Company example**

At **IBM**, the overnight transition to remote working due to the COVID-19 pandemic led to the need for understanding and exposure to various collaboration tools (including Slack, Webex, Mural and Trello) used in the company. Multiple upskilling sessions were conducted to help employees with disabilities to understand usage and all accessibility features and shortcuts, enabling them to participate and contribute fully as virtual team members. Dedicated slack channels were launched to promote regular collaboration among the various members, complementing and helping to continue conversations and day-to-day knowledge sharing.

Source: Direct communication with IBM India Diversity & Inclusion Partner, October 2021

2.4.2 Confidentiality of information

- During recruitment, questions about whether an applicant has a disability or about health conditions or medical diagnosis should not be asked unless this is a criterion of eligibility to apply for the job. Such information is personal and confidential.
- If a candidate or employee requests reasonable accommodation, the information required should concern functional or experienced limitations and how barriers linked to these can be reduced or dismantled through adjustments, modifications or assistive devices.
- Information regarding a candidate's or employee's disabilities or health condition should only be disclosed with the individual's consent and on a need-to-know basis (box 18).

► **Box 18. Confidentiality of information – Available guidance**

The **Code of Practice on the Protection of Workers' Personal Data** (1997) can be used in the development of policies and practical measures at the enterprise level.^a Guidance on confidentiality of information is also contained in the ILO guide *Promoting Diversity and Inclusion Through Workplace Adjustments*.^b

Source: ^a See https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/safety-and-health-at-work/normative-instruments/code-of-practice/WCMS_107797/lang--en/index.htm; ^b see https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/equality-and-discrimination/WCMS_536630/lang--en/index.htm.

30 See, for example, GBDN and ONCE, *An Inclusive Digital Economy for People with Disabilities*, 2021.

31 See, for example, Robotics & Automation, "Robotics to aid people with disabilities at work", 5 October 2018, <https://roboticsandautomationnews.com/2018/10/05/robotics-to-aid-people-with-disabilities-at-work/19340/>.

2.4.3 Job progression

To enable employees with disabilities to progress in their careers, companies should:

- ensure that they have equal opportunities with other workers to acquire the skills and experience necessary to advance in their job, including through in-service training programmes and external vocational training;
- facilitate their participation by adjusting time schedules, venues and programmes as required and making materials accessible;
- make information about career development and promotional opportunities available in a range of accessible print and digital formats, and communicate this information to workers with different disabilities;
- actively encourage workers with disabilities, and in particular women with disabilities, to take part in training provided and to apply for promotions, particularly where it appears that they may be reluctant to do so because of any obstacle arising from their disability or perceived obstacles in their working environment; and
- in considering promotions, take account of prior experience and present performance and capabilities in addition to formal qualifications suitable to the essential requirements of the job.

In designing measures to promote job progression, it is important to take account of the additional barriers confronting persons with disabilities who face discrimination on multiple grounds (box 19). To motivate and encourage women with disabilities to avail of opportunities to attend training programmes that a company organizes or apply for promotions, for example, they should be explicitly included in measures to encourage and support women in their careers.

► **Box 19. Job progression – Promising company practices**

Anbang Pharmaceutical Company, in China's Hunan Province, initially employed people with speech and hearing disabilities in simple packaging work, based on the assumption that their efficiency was low. Following a takeover of the company by Tianji Holdings in 2010, the new company president came to realize that their productivity was not low at all and in some cases exceeded that of other employees. A new human resources strategy was developed, aiming to recruit employees with disabilities with a higher educational background than before to diversify the opportunities open to employees with disabilities. Three professional development paths are currently offered:

- production and operation posts, in which persons with disabilities with a low educational level perform low-skill work, with the opportunity to be promoted to management posts, such as workshop foreman or team leader, if they excel;
- professional technical posts, mainly for graduates of universities, colleges and technical schools and starting with clerical posts with the opportunity to progress to professional, technical or management posts, such as quality inspector, human resources clerk, workshop statistician or sales assistant; and
- management posts, such as director or department manager, open to those who excel in other posts in the company. Currently, the employees with disabilities with management responsibilities account for about 10 per cent of the company workforce.^a

In the **Allegis Group**, equal opportunity extends beyond the recruitment process into career development. Employees with disabilities have equal access to leadership development programmes, internal transfers for exploring new businesses or responsibilities and coaching opportunities, with accommodations as required. In the women's leadership development programme, for example, the facilitator is sensitized to the needs of any employee with a disability and is assisted by the Learning and Development Team in making learning materials accessible. Persons with disabilities are frequently consulted on the challenges they experience when taking part in these programmes and ways of overcoming them.^b

At **IBM**, a Coach on Call platform was introduced in 2020 to make career guidance available for people with disabilities to explore, discover and define their career in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Topics covered could be long-term or immediate career goals, challenges faced at work or anything of concern in the context of the workplace or beyond. Personal information is kept confidential and a consolidated report is required to review, analyse and introduce remedial and proactive interventions. Based on the high participation rate and positive feedback, the scale of the platform has been extended further.^c

Source: ^a Direct communication with the GBDN's China Chapter, October 2021; ^b IBDN, *Inclusion Best Practice for Corporates* (2021); ^c direct communication with IBM India Diversity & Inclusion Partner, October 2021.

2.4.4 Job retention

Retaining and facilitating the return to work of employees who acquire a disability during their working life means that companies retain experienced workers with valued expertise, in whom considerable investments have been made in the course of their time with the company. Commitment to job retention and return to work is good for workplace morale.

The **ILO Code of Practice on Managing Disability in the Workplace (2001)** provides guidance to employers on job retention and the return to work of employees who acquire a disability or develop reduced capacity to perform their jobs.

If an employee acquires a disability or reduced capacity while in employment, companies should:

- support early intervention and referral to treatment and rehabilitation;
- have measures in place for the gradual return to work;
- identify and implement any adjustments that might be required to do the job, such as in the workstation or the working environment, in consultation with support and technical advisory services;
- make opportunities available for workers to test work in alternative jobs within the enterprise, based on their occupational preferences, if they are unable to return to their previous job and based on their occupational preferences, providing for training or retraining if required; and
- inform supervisors and co-workers of the changed situation.

Companies should inform their suppliers and sources of procurement of their job retention strategies in the framework of their broader disability-inclusion policy, with a view to encouraging similar good practices down through the supply chain (box 20).

Employers' organizations can take on important advocacy roles for job retention of those who acquire a disability while in employment, such as by providing practical information and advisory services, particularly to small companies, in addition to their general work in promoting disability inclusion in the workplace.

► **Box 20. Job retention during the COVID-19 pandemic**

In the Asia-Pacific region, millions of jobs were lost or suspended in 2020 due to the pandemic.^a While there is to date no comprehensive overview, people with disabilities appear to have been badly affected, according to localized surveys.^b In addition to government measures offering support through COVID-19-related employment and social protection measures, many companies have worked to facilitate the continuation of employees with disabilities in employment through telework, flexible hours and paid leave, according to the results of a GBDN survey of national business and disability networks and their company members in May 2020.^c A reaffirmation that disability inclusion should remain a priority for companies during and after the COVID-19 crisis was made in a declaration adopted at the annual GBDN conference in November 2020.^d National business and disability networks have also organized events and issued guidance on the topic.

Individual companies have taken steps to alleviate hardship brought about by the pandemic. With more than two thirds of its hotels closed due to the COVID-19 crisis, the **Accor Hotel Group** undertook proactive measures to support its employees and partners, including the creation of the ALL Heartist Fund – a 70 million euro special purpose fund devoted to help its employees and individual partners experiencing financial hardship due to the crisis.^e And as part of its COVID-19 Global Charitable Fund, established in April 2020 to help recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in the communities and markets in which it operates, **Standard Chartered** allocated an additional US\$25 million for economic recovery to support education, employability and entrepreneurship projects for young people, especially girls and people with visual impairments, through its Futuremakers global initiative to tackle inequality.^f

Source: ^aILO, "ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the World of Work, Sixth edition, Updated Estimates and Analysis", Briefing Note (September 2020); ILO, "ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the World of Work, Fifth Edition, Updated Estimates and Analysis", Briefing Note (June 2020); ^b see, for example, *Times of India*, "How COVID-19 lockdown has hit disabled people hard", 6 April 2020; BBC, "Coronavirus: the disabled Indians losing their livelihoods", 30 September 2020; Raoul Wallenberg Institute, *The Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Older Persons in a Pandemic – Findings From Two Studies Conducted in China* (2020); ^c GBDN 2020; ^d see <http://gbdn2020annualreport.altervista.org/ar-english-version.html>; ^e see <https://group.accor.com/en/group/our-commitments/all-heartist-fund>; ^f see <https://www.sc.com/en/sustainability/investing-in-communities/#futuremakers>.

2.4.5 Improving accessibility

Accessibility is of central importance in enabling people with disabilities to participate in a workplace (boxes 21 and 22). This includes access to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications (technology and systems) and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas.³² Any gender-specific needs should be addressed by promoting gender-responsive policies and programmes. For example, the Urmi Group in Bangladesh provides a dormitory facility for its female employees so that they do not have to travel at night.

Accessibility should be understood to include signage, manuals, workplace instructions and electronic information as well as information frequently conveyed by sound – where sirens or bells are used. These should be complemented where necessary with alternative devices, such as flashing lights.

- Companies seeking to become disability-inclusive should assign responsibility for improving accessibility to a specific manager or managers. These persons should become familiar with national and international building-accessibility standards and web content accessibility guidelines. They should consult with disability employee resource groups or other representatives of persons with disabilities.
- The physical workplace accessibility measures should be closely linked to the occupational safety and health standards observed by the company, under the supervision of safety officers.
- Accessibility managers and safety officers should work to ensure that:
 - access barriers to and within company buildings, including rented facilities, are dismantled;
 - workplaces and tools are adapted if required;
 - all communication materials and information and communication technology are accessible;
 - the company websites are compliant with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines; and
 - reasonable accommodation is provided to individual employees with disabilities, if needed, to ensure their effective participation.
- Managers should be accountable for implementation of the accessibility improvements, in the framework of the strategic targets set.

► **Box 21. Accessibility toolkits and advisory services – Examples**

The **International Labour Organization's *Promoting Diversity and Inclusion through Workplace Adjustments*** gives guidance on reasonable accommodation and on how and when this should be provided in a workplace.^a

The **Global Business and Disability Network's** primer on digital accessibility, ***Leave No One Off-line***, aims to promote actions to operationalize digital accessibility as a strategic element of digital inclusion.^b

The **Disability Portfolio** of the **Inclusive Futures initiative** includes an accessibility standards leaflet and an accessibility audit checklist.^c

The **Employers' Federation of Ceylon Employers' Network on Disability** advises on the preparation of communication materials in accessible formats and undertakes accessibility audits of buildings and websites to make recommendation on creating a barrier-free physical and digital environment. Its Software and Assistive Devices Unit advises on mobile applications and devices that improve the quality of life at work and in general.

Source: ^a See https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_111484.pdf; ^b see <http://www.businessanddisability.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Digital-accessibility-primer.pdf>; ^c <https://inclusivefutures.org/disability-confident-employers-toolkit/>.

32 See Article 9 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

► **Box 22. Improving accessibility – Promising company practices**

Accenture Philippines set up the first-ever Accessibility Centre in Manila to drive inclusion in its workplace by humanizing technology. It offers persons with disabilities and their work teams the unique tools, support and technology they need to be successful. The commitment towards accessibility has been moved a step further by the recent launching of innovative Accenture Mobile Accessibility Centres with similar capabilities. These centres showcase a range of assistive technology and disability-prevention technology solutions, providing persons with different abilities the opportunity to test, use and experience various assistive technologies and ergonomic equipment before raising an accommodation request. These spaces also serve as hubs for engaging, collaborating and exchanging ideas to support Accenture's employees with disabilities, partners, clients and the broader community.^a

At the **Coles Group**, an Australian retailer with more than 2,500 retail outlets nationally, accessibility has been a priority within its diversity and inclusion strategy for many years. The Coles Group vision is to recognize and enable people with all kinds of abilities, including its team members, customers, suppliers, partners and the community. In 2021, the Coles Group published its next Accessibility Plan to drive progress across the areas of team, customer (products and services) and community and suppliers.

At **Fujitsu**, a Japanese multinational company that provides innovative IT services and products globally, a top priority is to build a diverse and inclusive workplace in which everyone can be completely themselves and succeed. When people feel confident to talk openly about their disabilities and request the adjustments that they need to carry out their roles effectively, the company can unlock the full talent potential of persons with disabilities. The company aims to speed up the process of implementing workplace adjustments for people with disabilities and to improve accessibility in internal and external communications, such as insisting on subtitles on all videos and including accessibility ribbons on its blogs.^b

GSK, the global pharmaceutical company based in the United Kingdom, continues to invest in creating a more accessible and usable built environment, based on assessments at its sites against local codes and its own Global Inclusive Design [built environment] Standards. GSK aims to roll out its Workplace Adjustment Service to more countries.^c

Dedicated to cultivating a disability-confident workplace where everyone can participate, **MSD**, a global biopharmaceutical company, is committed to implementing universal design learning and facility-accessibility standards that improve employee performance, safety and social participation rates. Improvements aim to benefit not only people with disabilities but also all MSD employees working at facilities around the world. The company leverages best-in-class and next-generation digitally accessible technology to enhance its employee, patient and consumer experience.^d

Source: ^aDirect communication with Accenture Disability Inclusion team, September 2021; ^bsee <https://www.thevaluable500.com/the-valuable-500/>; ^c <http://www.businessanddisability.org/publications/>; ^d see <https://www.thevaluable500.com/the-valuable-500/>.

2.4.6 Occupational safety and health

A company's disability-inclusion strategy should link to its policy on promoting a safe and healthy workplace, including provision for occupational safety and health measures.

Provision should be made for measures to prevent and deal with any incidence of violence or harassment at work, including gender-based violence and harassment for which women and women with disabilities are at a higher risk. Persons with disabilities can experience violence and harassment in unique ways and in greater proportion than those without disability – including in the form of intimidation and verbal abuse, although their experience is often overlooked. Guidance on this topic is provided in the ILO briefing note³³ on the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention (No. 190) and its accompanying Recommendation (No. 206).³⁴

Included in their safety and health standards, companies should ensure that the whole workforce understands the right of workers with disabilities to reasonable accommodation so that this is not regarded as an act of favouritism. Such a perspective can trigger resentment and possible harassment on the part of co-workers or supervisors.

2.4.7 Review and evaluation

Accountability for the achievement of strategic targets is central to the effectiveness of a disability-inclusion policy (box 23). Regular reviews should take place so that progress can be assessed, any problems arising can be assessed and changes can be introduced to address them.

► Box 23. Achieving targets – Company examples

In **Accenture**, the global digital services company, progress in promoting the recruitment, retention and advancement of employees with disabilities and in other areas, such as adjustment, accommodation, infrastructure support and partnership with the ecosystem, is reviewed biannually through a scorecard using a five-pronged measurement methodology that focuses on leadership, talent, accessibility, inclusive culture and ecosystem.^a

In **Allegis India**, the managing director's emphasis on appreciating and acknowledging efforts and his personal involvement in removing barriers in the disability and inclusion journey through monthly reviews with the diversity and inclusion leader encourages managers and other leaders to try new approaches.^b

Source: ^a Direct communication with Accenture Disability Inclusion team, September 2021; ^b IBDN, *Inclusion Best Practice for Corporates* (2021), <http://www.ciiibdn.com/Publication/IBDN-Report.pdf>.

2.5 Fostering the employability of jobseekers with disabilities

Many companies recognize that performance is determined by skills rather than disability. To build up the capacity of persons with disabilities with skills sought by employers before they apply for jobs, companies either directly or through their corporate foundations might decide to:

- collaborate with vocational training providers to support skills development programmes for women and men with disabilities, including youth with disabilities, linked to labour market requirements and opportunities;



33 See https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/briefingnote/wcms_738118.pdf.

34 *ibid.*

- collaborate with disability-related agencies in offering supported employment placements during which an individual is trained on the job by an external job coach or a company supervisor;
- offer work trials or internships to selected individuals with disabilities; and
- take part in mentorship programmes or programmes to prepare jobseekers with disabilities to apply for jobs, paying attention to equal participation and opportunities for women as well as men with disabilities and avoiding inadvertent promotion of occupational segregation.

Measures undertaken to promote skills development among jobseekers with disabilities should address possible gender-related and other barriers faced by persons with disabilities.

National business and disability networks can provide support to people with disabilities in preparation for their job search through career guidance, vocational training and preparation for job searching (boxes 24 and 25).

► **Box 24. Improving recruitment prospects – Sample national business and disability network programmes**

The Specialised Training and Resource Centre at the **Employers' Federation of Ceylon Employers' Network on Disability** offers training to persons with different types of disability to enhance their capacity for employment. Training programmes include English language training and communications skills; reading without seeing for persons with visual impairment; women empowerment programmes; training in the use of technology applications (computers and smartphones); e-book editing; and entrepreneurship.^a

The **Australian Network on Disability's Stepping Into Programme** aims to make it easier for students with disabilities to transition from study to employment. Students gain paid, hands-on work experience in a private or public sector organization through internships that run for a minimum of four weeks during semester breaks.^b

Source: ^a See <https://employers.lk/disability-resource-centre/>; ^b see <https://www.and.org.au/pages/stepping-into...-programs.html>.

► **Box 25. Building up the skills of jobseekers with disabilities – Company examples**

In collaboration with more than 100 schools, the **Accor Greater China Hub** launched a special internship programme in its hotels in May 2021 for students with disabilities, with support of the Accor ALL Heartist Fund. The aim is to encourage hotels to open more positions for students, especially under the COVID-19 pandemic situation, and to hire successful students as permanent staff, following a six-month internship. By July 2021, 50 internship positions were offered and eight interns had been successfully hired. Accor China aimed to hire at least 30 students with disabilities by the end of 2021.^a

Accenture India has an inclusive internship programme, Aarambh, that provides an on-the-job learning opportunity to women from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and persons with disabilities (all genders), with the aim to build the workforce of the future. The programme is structured with an immersive curriculum to develop and empower interns as they grow in their career, coupled with an opportunity to be assigned to an Accenture project and thus gain experience while working at the forefront of technology, solving real business challenges, developing innovative solutions and learning from inspiring leaders.^b

The **Adecco Group**, a global human resources solutions company, believes that the path to inclusion starts with a single-minded focus on skills: on what each candidate or employee can do rather than what they cannot undertake. In more than half of its markets, Adecco Group runs programmes to integrate people with a disability in the workforce, including training, under the broad slogan of "Talent Without Labels".^c

► **Box 25. (cont.)**

Allegis has developed a train-and-hire model aiming to develop a talent pool of persons with disabilities with the skills required in the company itself and by its clients, suppliers and vendors. The three-week training programme includes communication and computer skills for the workplace; exposure to the corporate environment; preparation for the recruitment process; and mobility training for persons with visual impairment. Interactions with potential recruiters are arranged during the training to dispel myths and improve overall preparedness to hiring persons with disabilities.^d

In Singapore, **Deutsche Bank's Work Placement Programme** provides internship opportunities for persons with disabilities studying in institutes of higher learning. Suitable applicants are identified in collaboration with the universities and with SG Enable, the employment service catering to persons with disabilities. Deutsche Bank won the Achievement Award – Innovative Project at the fourth Enabling Employers Awards in 2017 for its internship programme. In addition to the work placement programme, Deutsche Bank Singapore participates in a mentorship programme that matches students with disabilities to managers and executives in the corporate world. This has given the bank's hiring managers a first-hand experience of working with people with disabilities, which has resulted in a number of trainees being recruited.^e

Marks & Spencer, through its Marks & Start employability programme, collaborates with training centres in Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka to provide access to vocational skills training for persons with disabilities who go on to work in the company's source factories.^f

Standard Chartered Young Futuremakers Thailand project (2021—23) seeks to tackle the mismatch between the skills possessed by young people, including those with disabilities, and the skills employers seek by enhancing their ability to enter the labour market, secure and retain a job, cope with change and be better prepared for a rapidly changing world of work.^g Demand-led technical skills training, employability training and career guidance are provided. Job placements are arranged. The project is implemented in close collaboration with relevant government ministries, the Employers' Confederation of Thailand, sectoral business associations, workers' organizations and associations of persons with disabilities.^g

Source: ^a Direct communication with Accor's Diversité et mission Handicap – Talent & Culture, July 2021; ^b direct communication with Accenture, October 2021; ^c see <https://www.thevaluable500.com/>; ^d IBDN, *Inclusion Best Practice for Corporates* (2021), <http://www.ciiibdn.com/Publication/IBDN-Report.pdf>; ^e see https://www.db.com/news/detail/20170725-deutsche-bank-singapore-wins-at-enabling-employers-awards?language_id=1; ^f see, for example, <https://www.crp-bangladesh.org/crp-project/ms> and <https://jobs.marksandspencer.com/marks-start>; ^g see <https://www.ilo.org/asia/projects/WCMS781424/lang--en/index.htm>; ^d see https://www.ilo.org/asia/projects/WCMS_781424/lang--en/index.htm.

Tapping the potential of men and women with disabilities in partnership with relevant stakeholders, and in particular in consultation with persons with disabilities and their representatives, will enable companies to benefit from the contributions that they can make to profitability, their customer base and their corporate social responsibility reputation. Alliances with national business and disability networks enable companies to exchange knowledge and build on the experience of other firms. Disability inclusion makes good business sense.



3.

CONTACTS ILO GLOBAL BUSINESS AND DISABILITY NETWORK

The GBDN is a worldwide employer-led platform for multinational companies, national business networks and organizations of persons with disabilities that promotes the inclusion of persons with disabilities in private sector companies and more broadly. See <http://www.businessanddisability.org>.

National business and disability networks in Asia and the Pacific³⁵

Australian Network on Disability (AND)

unded by Australian private and public employers from a range of sectors, the network was set up in 2000 to advance the inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of business through support provided to members and other organizations to change their internal behaviours, attitudes and systems and increase their knowledge so that they can confidently engage with persons with disabilities.

See <https://www.and.org.au/about-us/>.

35 Former business and disability networks in Cambodia (Business Advisory Council) and Viet Nam (Blue Ribbon Employer Network) are not currently operational.

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| Bangladesh Business and Disability Network | <p>This network of employers and employers' associations, formed in collaboration with disability organizations, NGOs and development partners, works to create a more disability-inclusive workforce in Bangladesh.</p> <p>See https://www.bbdn.com.bd/page/3/.</p> |
| China Chapter of the ILO Global Business and Disability Network | <p>Launched in 2018, the China Chapter reaches out to interested stakeholders to tackle the challenges that companies face when hiring and retaining persons with disabilities. It gathers information on best practices and disseminates knowledge and expertise among its members.</p> <p>See https://www.ilo.org/beijing/what-we-do/events-and-meetings/WCMS762620/lang--en/index.htm.</p> |
| India Business Disability Network | <p>A joint initiative of the Confederation of Indian Industry, the Employers' Federation of India and the ILO, the network was set up in 2019 to strengthen companies' efforts to engage, enable and empower persons with disabilities at the workplace.</p> <p>See http://www.ciiibdn.com.</p> |
| Indonesia Business Disability Network | <p>This network, established in 2016, recognizes the benefits of a diverse workforce and promotes the inclusion of people with disabilities in workplaces nationwide, based on the principle of equality of opportunity.</p> <p>See https://www.ilo.org/jakarta/whatwedo/projects/ibdn/lang--en/index.htm.</p> |
| New Zealand: Accessibility Tick | <p>Accessibility Tick helps New Zealand organizations become more accessible and inclusive of people with disabilities as both employees and customers. Member organizations are provided the tools and expertise they need to employ people with disabilities in positions that are successful for both employers and employees. An Accessibility Tick is awarded to qualifying companies. Accessibility Tick will be incorporated into the newly established New Zealand Disability Employers' Network towards the end of 2021.</p> <p>See https://accessibilitytick.nz.</p> |
| Philippine Business and Disability Network | <p>Launched in 2020, the network helps businesses improve the accessibility of their work opportunities for persons with disabilities by providing a platform for sharing and learning of best practices and experiences; developing knowledge products and tools that enable businesses to work towards having more inclusive and barrier-free workplaces; and collaborating with different organizations towards strengthening programmes for disability-inclusive workplaces.</p> <p>Contact via pbdn@projectinclusion.ph.</p> |
| Singapore Network on Disability | <p>Set up in 2015, the network is a community of businesses in Singapore across various industries that collaborate to share expertise, experience and resources, aiming to help advance the equitable inclusion of persons with disabilities by raising awareness of different abilities, promoting equality of opportunity and encouraging community engagement.</p> <p>See https://www.sbnod.com/.</p> |
| Sri Lanka: Employers' Federation of Ceylon Employers' Network on Disability | <p>This network, launched by the Employers' Federation of Ceylon in 2000, sets out to facilitate employment and training opportunities in the private sector for jobseekers with disabilities by creating links between the business community and organizations dealing with disability issues to facilitate mainstreaming.</p> <p>See https://employers.lk/disability-resource-centre/.</p> |

Organizations of persons with disabilities

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|---|--|
| ASEAN Disability Forum | <p>The forum, a network of organizations of persons with disabilities in ASEAN countries of South-East Asia, provides a platform to coordinate actions organizations for persons with disabilities to advocate for disability-inclusive policy formulation and implementation. The forum is a member of the International Disability Alliance.</p> <p>See https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/content/asean-disability-forum.</p> |
| Disabled People's International Asia-Pacific | <p>A network of national organizations or assemblies of disabled people, it was established to promote the human rights of people living with disabilities through full participation, equalization of opportunity and development and social and economic integration.</p> <p>See http://www.dpiap.org/.</p> |
| Down Syndrome International (DSI) | <p>The organization is committed to improving the quality of life for people with Down syndrome, including contributing towards inclusive employment. In Asia and the Pacific, it is active in Bangladesh and Tajikistan.</p> <p>See https://www.ds-int.org/.</p> |
| Inclusion International | <p>An International Disability Alliance member, this organization for persons with an intellectual disability and their families advocates with its member societies in more than 115 countries for the inclusion of people who have an intellectual disability in all aspects of their communities, based on shared values of respect, diversity, human rights, solidarity and inclusion. Members include 22 organizations in Asia and the Pacific.</p> <p>See https://inclusion-international.org/our-global-network/#ASIA.</p> |
| International Disability Alliance | <p>The Alliance comprises more than 1,100 organizations of persons with disabilities and their families from eight global and six regional networks. It works to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in global efforts to advance human rights and sustainable development. It is recognized by the United Nations as the most representative organization of persons with disabilities globally.</p> <p>See http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/.</p> |
| International Federation of Hard of Hearing People (IFHOH) | <p>The Federation is an umbrella group comprising national organizations of and for hard-of-hearing and late-deafened people. It provides a platform for cooperation and exchange of information among its members and interested parties and works to improve access for hard-of-hearing people worldwide. The group includes members organizations in Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Japan, Mongolia, Nepal and Viet Nam.</p> <p>See https://www.ifhoh.org/.</p> |
| Pacific Disability Forum | <p>The Forum was established in 2002 and is an International Disability Alliance member that works towards inclusive, barrier-free, socially just and gender-equitable societies that recognize the human rights, citizenship, contribution and potential of persons with disabilities in Pacific island countries and territories.</p> <p>See https://www.pacificdisability.org.</p> |
| World Blind Union (WBU) | <p>The union represents around 600 organizations of blind and partially sighted persons, working to advance the participation of all men and women who are blind or partially sighted. Members in Asia and the Pacific include organizations in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Kyrgyz Republic, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.</p> <p>See https://worldblindunion.org/members-and-partners/regions-and-countries/asia/asia-national-members/.</p> |

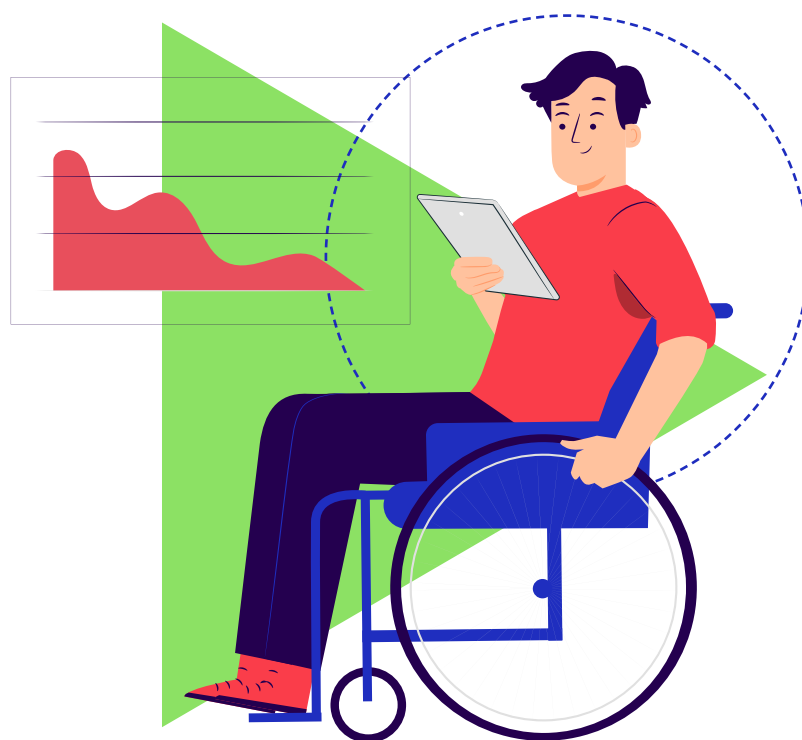
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| World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) | The Federation works for the recognition of human rights and promotion of equal opportunities for Deaf people everywhere. |
| World Federation of Deafblind (WFDB) | The Federation is an advocacy organization, representing national organizations of deafblind persons in 62 countries worldwide, serving as a platform for the exchange of knowledge and experience and promoting inclusion and full participation of deafblind persons throughout society. See https://wfdb.eu/ . |
| World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry | The network comprises member organizations and individuals from all regions globally, including Asia and the Pacific. Members are persons and organizations of persons with lived experience of mental health problems or psychosocial disabilities and of psychiatry and mental health services. It advocates for the human rights of persons with psychosocial disabilities worldwide. See http://wnusp.net/ . |

Persons with disabilities – Representative organizations of service providers

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| Rehabilitation International | A global organization and network, it works to advance the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities around the world. It provides a forum for the exchange of experience and information on research and practice. Members in more than 100 countries include people with disabilities, service providers, government agencies, academics, researchers and advocates working to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities. See http://www.riglobal.org/ . |
| Workability Asia | Set up in 2004 as a regional group of Workability International (established in 1987), it represents providers of work and employment services to persons with disabilities in at least 12 countries in the region. Annual conferences provide a forum for exchanging knowledge relating to the promotion of gainful employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. See https://www.workabilityasia.com . Email: workabilityasia@gmail.com |

4.

GUIDELINES, FACT SHEETS, PUBLICATIONS AND OTHER RESOURCES



A range of guidance is available to facilitate the process of making workplaces more disability-inclusive and to include people with disabilities as customers and stakeholders. Here are some examples of examples of particular relevance to companies in the Asia-Pacific region as they move towards becoming more disability-inclusive.

4.1 ILO resources

The *Code of Practice on Managing Disability in the Workplace* is a set of guidelines for employers in developing their disability-inclusion strategies. It can be accessed at https://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS_103324/lang--eng/index.htm.

Job and Work Analysis can assist enterprises in matching jobs to the skills and capacities of candidates with disabilities and in identifying adjustments that may be required to enable individuals to perform their job effectively. It is available at https://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS_111484/lang--eng/index.htm.

Promoting Diversity and Inclusion Through Workplace Adjustments explains the concept of reasonable adjustments and reasonable accommodation and provide guidance on their provision in the workplace. It is available at https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/equality-and-discrimination/WCMS_536630/lang--en/index.htm.

Recent ILO publications also examine ways in which companies have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic and what can be done to ensure that employees with disabilities are not left behind. These and other publications can be sourced at https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/disability-and-work/facet/lang--en/index.htm?facetcriteria=TYP=Publication&facetdynlist=WCMS_397581.

In collaboration with the United Nations Global Compact, a *Guide for Business on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* has been developed and is available at https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/disability-and-work/WCMS_571094/lang-en/index.htm or <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/library/5381>.

The GBDN has developed a range of resources for employers relating to disability-inclusive workplaces, which can be sourced at <http://www.businessanddisability.org/publications/>.

The GBDN's Model Self-Assessment Tool, which is based on its Charter, is available at <http://www.businessanddisability.org/charter-principles-based-self-assessment/>.

Other ILO publications for employers on disability issues can be accessed at https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/disability-and-work/wage-employment/WCMS_574885/lang-en/index.htm.

4.2 National business and disability networks

The Australian Network on Disability has developed a series of fact sheets dealing with disability in general and disability etiquette as well as different aspects of employer responsibilities relating to the development of a disability-inclusive workplace and catering to customers with disabilities. They are available at <https://www.and.org.au/how-we-can-help-you/>. It has also published several free and paid publications for companies that can be sourced through <https://www.and.org.au/resources/>.

The Bangladesh Business and Disability Network has produced guidelines on disability inclusion in the private and public sectors. The document is available at <https://www.bbdn.com.bd/guidelines-for-disability-inclusion/>.

The India Business and Disability Network has published guidance on disability inclusion as well as several publications providing examples of innovative practice in promoting inclusion in different sectors. These can be sourced at <http://www.ciiibdn.com/publication.html>.

4.3 Non-governmental organizations

The Inclusion Works Disability-confident Employers' Toolkit provides practical guidance to make it easier for leaders, human resources executives and property managers to foster inclusive workspaces. It is available through <https://inclusivefutures.org/disability-confident-employers-toolkit/>.

The Global Reporting Initiative and ONCE's *Disability in Sustainable Reporting* guide provides practical advice on how organizations can publicly report on their commitment to respect and advance the rights of persons with disabilities. It highlights the range of activities that can have a positive or negative impact on their rights and identifies a number of GRI disclosures that can be used as a basis for reporting on disability. It is available at <http://www.businessanddisability.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/GRI-and-Fundacion-ONCE-Disability-in-Sustainability-Reporting.pdf>.

4.4 Companies

Accenture publications relating to disability inclusion can be sourced through its website at:

- https://www.accenture.com/_acnmedia/PDF-89/Accenture-Disability-Inclusion-Research-Report.pdf
- https://www.accenture.com/_acnmedia/PDF-91/Accenture-Accessibility-Advantage-PoV-FINAL.pdf#zoom=50
- https://www.accenture.com/_acnmedia/PDF-142/Accenture-Enabling-Change-Getting-Equal-2020-Disability-Inclusion-Report.pdf
- https://www.accenture.com/_acnmedia/PDF-155/Accenture-AI-For-Disability-Inclusion.pdf

EY practical tips on increasing disability confidence in organizations is available at <https://www.charta-der-vielfalt.de/uploads/txdreipccdvdiversity/ey-taking-disability-confidence-global.pdf>.

Standard Chartered's disability inclusion toolkit can be downloaded from https://av.sc.com/corp-en/content/docs/SC_Disability-Toolkit.pdf.

ANNEX I

Glossary

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| Adjustment | Adaptation of a job, including adjustment and/or accommodation modification of machinery and equipment and/or modification of the job content, work organization and the adaptation of the work environment, to provide access to the place of work and working time to facilitate the employment of individuals with disabilities. |
| Disability management | A process in the workplace designed to facilitate the employment of persons with a disability through a coordinated effort addressing individual needs, work environment, enterprise needs and legal responsibilities. |
| Persons with disabilities | Persons with disabilities include “those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others” (see Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities). |
| Discrimination | Any distinction, exclusion or preference based on certain grounds that nullifies or impairs equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation. General standards that establish distinctions based on prohibited grounds constitute discrimination in law. The specific attitude of a public authority or a private individual that unequally treats persons or members of a group on a prohibited ground constitutes discrimination in practice. Indirect discrimination refers to apparently neutral situations, regulations or practices that, in fact, result in the unequal treatment of persons with certain characteristics. Distinction or preferences that may result from application of special measures of protection and assistance taken to meet the particular requirements of disabled persons are not considered discriminatory. |
| Employer | A person or organization employing workers under a written or verbal contract of employment that establishes the rights and duties of both parties, in accordance with national law and practice. Governments, public authorities and private companies as well as individuals may be employers. |
| Employee assistance | A programme – either jointly operated by a programme of an employer and a workers’ organization or by an employer alone or a workers’ organization alone – that offers assistance to workers and frequently also to their family members, with problems liable to cause personal distress and that affect or could eventually affect job productivity. |
| Employers’ organization | An organization whose membership consists of individual employers, other associations of employers or both, formed primarily to protect and promote the interests of members and to provide services to its members in employment-related matters. |

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| Equal opportunity | Equal access to and opportunities for all persons in employment, vocational training and particular occupations, without discrimination. Special positive measures aimed at effective equality of opportunity and treatment between workers with disabilities and other workers shall not be regarded as discriminating against other workers (see Article 4 of ILO Convention No. 159). |
| Impairment | Any loss or abnormality of a psychological, physiological or physical function, including the systems of mental function. |
| International labour standards | Principles and norms in all labour-related matters that are adopted by the tripartite International Labour Conference (governments, employers and workers). These standards take the form of international labour Conventions and Recommendations. Through ratifications by Member States, Conventions create binding obligations to implement their provisions. Recommendations are non-binding instruments that provide guidance on policy, legislation and practice. |
| Job adaptation | The adaptation or redesign of tools, machines, workstations and the work environment to an individual's needs. It may also include adjustments in work organization, work schedules, sequences of work and in breaking down work tasks to their basic elements. |
| Job analysis | Making a detailed list of the duties that a particular job involves and the skills required. This indicates what the worker has to do, how they must do it, why they have to do it and what skill is involved in doing it. The analysis can also include facts about tools used and machines. |
| Job retention | Remaining with the same employer and with the same or different duties or conditions of employment, including return after a period of paid or unpaid absence. |
| Mainstreaming | Including people with disabilities in employment, education, training and all sectors of society. |
| Organization of persons with disabilities | Organizations that represent persons with disabilities and advocate for their rights. |
| Organization for persons with disabilities | Organizations that provide services for persons with disabilities. |
| Reasonable accommodation | Necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure that persons with disabilities can enjoy or exercise on an equal basis with others all human rights and fundamental freedoms (see the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities). |

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| Supported employment | Involves on-the-job training or work experience, combined with personal support for the person with a disability, in the form of job coaching or other types of assistance from professional staff. |
| Universal design | The design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. Universal design shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed (see Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities). |
| Vocational rehabilitation | A process that enables disabled persons to secure, retain and advance in suitable employment and hereby furthers their integration or reintegration into society. |
| Worker or employee | Any person who works for a wage or salary and performs services for an employer. Employment is governed by a written or verbal contract of service. |
| Working conditions | The factors determining the circumstances in which the worker works. These include hours of work, work organization, job content, welfare services and the measures taken to protect the occupational safety and health of the worker. |
| Working environment | The facilities and circumstances in which work takes place and the environmental factors that may affect workers' health. |
| Workplace | All the places where people in employment need to be or to go to carry out their work and that are under the direct or indirect control of the employer. Examples include an office, factory, plantation, construction site, ship and private residence. |
| Workstation | The part of the office or factory where an individual works, including desk or work surface used, chair, equipment and other items. |
| Work trial | Work activity to provide experience in or to test the suitability for a particular job. |

ANNEX II

Role of employers' organizations and employers envisaged in disability-related international treaties and initiatives

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006

The Convention requires States to recognize the right of persons with disabilities to work on an equal basis with others. Labour markets and work environments should become open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities, including those who acquire a disability in the course of their employment. States are called on to promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the private sector through appropriate policies and measures.

ILO Convention concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons), 1983 (No. 159) and Recommendation No. 168

Consultation of representative organizations of employers and workers on the implementation of the national policy on vocational rehabilitation and employment of disabled persons is required (Convention No. 159, Article 5). Employers are indirectly referred to in Recommendation No. 168 in terms of measures that might be introduced to create job opportunities on the open labour market, including financial incentives to employers to encourage them to provide training and subsequent employment for disabled persons, as well as to make reasonable adaptations. Enhanced contribution of employers' organizations is envisaged in a variety of ways, including advising members on vocational rehabilitation services available and on adjustments that could be made to facilitate the employment of persons with disabilities.

ILO Convention concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation, 1958 (No. 111) and Recommendation No. 111

Convention No. 111 prohibiting discrimination in employment and occupation on specified grounds is one of the ILO's fundamental Conventions and is widely ratified. Recommendation No. 111 details obligations on employers, who should not practise or countenance discrimination in engaging or training any person for employment, in advancing or retaining such person in employment or in fixing terms and conditions of employment. Advisory committees to support the implementation of national anti-discrimination policy in public and private employment should include representatives of employers as well as workers. There should be continuing cooperation between the competent authorities, representatives of employers and workers and appropriate bodies to consider what further positive measures may be necessary in the light of national conditions to put the principles of non-discrimination into effect.

ILO Vocational Rehabilitation (Disabled Persons) Recommendation, 1955

Until the adoption of Convention No. 159 and Recommendation No. 168 in 1983, Recommendation No. 99 was one of the most important international instruments concerning the right to work for persons with disabilities. It served as the basis for national legislation and practice in relation to vocational guidance, vocational training and placement. The role of employers foreseen included provision of training for persons with disabilities, with financial support, technical advice, medical or vocational assistance from the government and notification of job vacancies to the competent authority, with a view to recruitment as well as representation on advisory committees to advise on vocational rehabilitation policy development and implementation.

ILO Code of Practice on Managing Disability in the Workplace, 2001

This Code is an agreed, non-binding set of guidelines aimed primarily at enterprises to improve recruitment, promotion, job retention and return-to-work prospects for persons with disabilities, based on equality of opportunity.

UN Global Compact, 2000

The Global Compact is a voluntary initiative based on CEO commitments to implement universal sustainability principles on human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption, and take steps to advance societal goals. Its aims include promoting the implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and driving business awareness and action in support of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

The Incheon Strategy, Make the Right Real, for persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, 2012

This strategy forms the framework for the third Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities 2013–2022. The enhancement of work and employment prospects for people with disabilities is one of the goals, including targets on increasing work and employment for persons of working age who can and want to work and increasing the participation of persons with disabilities in vocational training and other employment-support programmes funded by governments.

Beijing Declaration and Action Plan to Accelerate the Implementation of the Incheon Strategy, 2017

The Declaration Calls on Asian and Pacific governments to develop and implement enabling schemes to promote the employment of persons with disabilities and increase their opportunities with respect to livelihood, decent work and entrepreneurship, particularly by promoting the inclusion of persons with diverse disabilities and women with disabilities, keeping in mind the provision of reasonable accommodation.

Sustainable Development Goals, 2015

In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals that reinforce the principle of “leaving no one behind”. The SDGs include a goal on promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. A target of this goal is to *achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities and equal pay for work of equal value*.

► **EmployAbility**

Tapping the potential of persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific – A guide for employers

ilo.org

For further information: International Labour Organization
Conditions of Work and Equality Department Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Branch
Route des Morillons 4, 1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland



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